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THE NATIONAL CONCERT HALL

THE NATIONAL CONCERT HALL

in association with

RADIO TELEFÍS ÉIREANN

presents

**Margaret Burke Sheridan
Centenary Concert**

Sunday 15th October, 1989





Photograph courtesy of Wolfhound Press.

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RADIO TELEFÍS ÉIREANN

presents

Margaret Burke Sheridan
Centenary Concert

SUZANNE MURPHY (soprano)

BERNADETTE GREEVY (mezzo-soprano)

RTE CONCERT ORCHESTRA

(Leader: Alan Smale)

DUBLIN GRAND OPERA SOCIETY CHORUS

(Chorus Master: Jonathan Webb)

ALBERT ROSEN (conductor)

PADRAIG O'ROURKE (presenter)

*The concert will be broadcast live on FM3 Radio and will be
recorded by RTE Television for future transmission.*



Suzanne Murphy

The Irish-born soprano Suzanne Murphy is particularly renowned for her interpretation of the major roles of Verdi, Bellini and Donizetti. She began her studies with Veronica Dunne at the College of Music in Dublin in 1973 and joined Welsh National Opera in 1976. Her first role for the company was Constanze in Mozart's *Il Seraglio* and since then her roles for the company have included Amelia (*I Masnadieri*), Elisabeth (*Don Carlos*) Leonore (*Il trovatore*), Elvira (*Ernani*), Violetta (*La Traviata*), Hanna Glawari (*The Merry Widow*), Musetta (*La Bohème*), Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*) and, to enormous critical acclaim, Elvira (*I Puritani*) and the title roles in *Norma* and *Lucia di Lammermoor*.

Other operatic engagements in Great Britain have included Constanze and Donna Anna for English National Opera. Donna Anna and the four soprano roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann* for Opera North and Constanze for Scottish Opera.

In 1987 Suzanne Murphy made a triumphant debut at the Vienna Staatsoper as Elektra in a new production of *Idomeneo* conducted by Nicholas Harnoncourt; she returned to Vienna in 1988. In the summer of 1985 Suzanne Murphy made her German debut singing the title role in a concert performance of *Norma* at the Munich Opera and other European engagements have included Rezia (*Oberon*) for the Opera de Lyon and Donna Anna at the Aix Festival. In the summer of 1988 she returned to Munich for Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*).

North American engagements have included *Norma* at the New York City Opera, Amelia (*Un ballo in maschera*), Elvira (*I Puritani*) and *Lucia* in Vancouver, and Fiordiligi, Ophelia (*Hamlet*) and *The Merry Widow* in Pittsburgh, where she will return in 1990 for *La Traviata*.

During the 1988-89 season, Suzanne Murphy sang Alice in Peter Stein's new production of *Falstaff* for Welsh National Opera, which was taken in January 1989 to New York and in May 1989 to Milan, Elektra (*Idomeneo*) in Cologne and in January 1989 she took part in an Armenian Gala Benefit concert at the Vienna State Opera. She sang the title role in *Norma* in the National Concert Hall in March/April, 1989 with the DGOS. The designer of this highly-acclaimed production was Ulderick Manani from Venice who specialises in designing for performances in non-performing areas.

Forthcoming operatic engagements include *Norma* in Vancouver, and *Idomeneo* at the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires.

Suzanne Murphy has an active concert career and apart from regular concerts throughout Britain, recent and forthcoming engagements include concerts in Austria, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Portugal.



Bernadette Greevy

Bernadette Greevy is recognised and acclaimed internationally as one of the finest mezzo-sopranos singing today. She has sung in concert with many of the great orchestras and has given innumerable recitals in all the major capitals of the world.

Whilst it could be said that the art of recital is her first love, she has sung, with conspicuous success, several major operatic roles, including Eboli in Verdi's *Don Carlos*, Charlotte in Massenet's *Werther*, Delilah in Saint-Saëns' *Samson and Delilah*, the title role in Massenet's *Herodiade* and Orfeo in Gluck's *Orfeo e Euridice*.

Bernadette Greevy has made many highly successful recordings, among them Handel arias, two Handel operas *Orlando* and *Ariodante*, Brahms' songs, Bach arias and Elgar's *Sea Pictures*, which the critic Ivan March nominated as his record of the year in 'Gramophone'. She has a particular affinity with the music of Mahler, and has recorded the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and *Kindertoten Lieder* with the RTE Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Janos Fürst. In February 1989, she took part in a major Mahler series in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Charles Dutoit, and recorded Berlioz's *Nuits d'Été* and Duparc songs with the Ulster Orchestra for Chandos.

Among the awards with which Bernadette Greevy has been honoured are the Harriet Cohen International Music Award for 'outstanding artistry' and the Order of Merit of the Order of Malta. She has been given an Honorary Doctorate of Music by the National University of Ireland. In March 1988, and as part of the Dublin City Millennium, University of Dublin, conferred on her the degree of Doctor of Music. Recently the honour of *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* was conferred on her by the Holy See.

In 1985 at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Culture, Miss Greevy toured the People's Republic of China where she gave recital and Master Classes. She has also given Master Classes in New Zealand and gives regular series at the National Concert Hall in Dublin and on RTE Radio and Television. She makes regular concert and recital appearances in London and throughout the UK and her recent overseas engagements have included Mahler's *Ruckert Lieder* and Beethoven's 9th Symphony with the Oslo Philharmonic, Brahms's *Alto Rhapsody* and Elgar's *Sea Pictures* in Ottawa. She is continuing her series of BBC Radio 3 recitals of music by Anglo-Irish composers: Stanford, Harty, Hughes, Charles Wood and E. J. Moeran.

In the 1989-90 season her engagements include the final concert of the Belfast Festival with the Ulster Orchestra on the 24th November, Elgar's *The Music Makers*, two performances of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia* in Barcelona, two performances of Mahler's *Symphony No. 3* with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen and a performance of Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* in the Royal Festival Hall in London with the BBC Symphony Orchestra.



RTE Concert Orchestra

The RTE Concert Orchestra is one of the most versatile orchestras in the world. Host to three Eurovision Song Contests, to the Bolshoi Ballet, Liberace, Henry Mancini, John Dankworth, Elmer Bernstein and many others, the RTE Concert Orchestra revels in a repertoire that ranges from classical to pop via film music, musicals and jazz.

The joy which this close-knit group brings to its music is evident in all its work and shines through the unrivalled experience of its concerts. Since its formation in 1948, the orchestra has proved a flagship of Irish entertainment and has delighted concert, radio and television audiences.

This orchestra has, in recent years, achieved overwhelming recognition for its attention to all areas of music making; from Handel to Humperdinck and from Lerner and Loewe to Lloyd Webber. In the last year it has received considerable acclaim as a Chamber Orchestra, yet this same orchestra creates record ticket sales for *The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*, *Music for Fun* family concerts, *Hooked on Classics* and other popular series.

The orchestra gives approximately 80 concerts a year both at the National Concert Hall and for regional Arts Associations. This, in addition to its radio and television commitments, keeps the orchestra home-based but it does go abroad occasionally. In 1980 it travelled 15,000 miles through the USA clocking up an incredible 63 concerts in 75 days and received rapturous applause from its audiences.

In 1987, the orchestra undertook its first ever UK tour playing to capacity houses, both in the Provinces and London; the final concert in the Royal Albert Hall on St. Patrick's Night was an inspiring occasion.

The orchestra is currently appearing in its own series *Make Mine Music* on RTE1.



Albert Rosen

Albert Rosen has recently conducted highly successful performances of *Katja Kabanova* with English National Opera in London. Among the many superlative reviews, Michael Kennedy of the Sunday Telegraph wrote "A *Katja* that would make Janáček proud". This adds to his past achievements in four continents. Studies in his native Vienna and in Prague were followed by principal conductorships in Prague, Dublin, Perth and Adelaide. He maintains lasting associations with several orchestras, including the BBC Philharmonic, and opera companies in Wexford, Dublin, London and Prague.

PART I

Orchestra

Verdi

Overture — I Vespri Siciliani

Bernadette Greevy

La Speranza (Otho)

Handel

Che faró (Orfeo ed Euridice)

Gluck

Suzanne Murphy

Ebben ne andro lontano (La Wally)

Catalani

Casta diva (with Chorus) (Norma)

Bellini

Bernadette Greevy

Saint-Saëns

Printemps qui commence

Amour, viens aider (Samson and Delilah)

Suzanne Murphy

Puccini

Un bel di (Madame Butterfly)

Suzanne Murphy,

Bernadette Greevy

and

DGOS Chorus

Puccini

Flower Duet and Humming Chorus

(Act 2, Madame Butterfly)

INTERVAL

ammc

PART II

Orchestra
Prelude to Act 3 (Lohengrin) Wagner

Suzanne Murphy
Willow Song and Ave Maria (Otello) Verdi

Bernadette Greevy
Habañera (with Chorus) Bizet
Sequidilla (Carmen)

Orchestra
Intermezzo (Manon Lescaut) Puccini

Suzanne Murphy
In quelle trine morbide Puccini
Sola, perduta abbandonata (Manon Lescaut)

Bernadette Greevy
O, mio Fernando (La Favorita) Donizetti

Chorus
Che internabile andirri vieni (Act 2, Don Pasquale) Donizetti

Suzanne Murphy
and
Bernadette Greevy
Jasmin Duet (Lakmé) Delibes

Orchestra
Overture — Russlan and Ludmilla Glinka

Margaret Burke Sheridan

BY ANNE CHAMBERS

From the cloistered life of a convent to the dazzling worldly heights of operatic stardom at La Scala and Covent Garden: between 1918 and 1930 a beautiful Irish soprano became one of the outstanding prima donnas of her day and captured the ears and hearts of the British and Italian opera public. Such giants of the opera world as Puccini and Toscanini, kings, queens, princes, popes and politicians as well as the plain people of gallery opera queues, fell beneath the magnetic spell of the personality and the artistry of La Sheridan.

She was born in 1889, the youngest of a family of five, in Castlebar, Co. Mayo where her father was the town postmaster. Her mother died when she was four and her elder brothers and sister emigrated to England and America. On the death of her father in 1901 she was sent to the Dominican School at Eccles Street in Dublin which was destined to become her 'home' until 1909.

At Eccles Street Margaret's remarkable singing voice was noticed and coached by a perceptive and talented nun, Mother Clement, and later by Dr. Vincent O'Brien, the teacher of John McCormack and James Joyce. In May 1908 she took the gold medal at the Feis Ceoil. A group of people in Dublin who recognised the exceptional talent of the young Mayo woman raised sufficient funds to enable her to enrol at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she spent two years.

Her ambition was to sing in grand opera but it was a difficult medium to enter. After her training at the RAM lack of means and uncertainty dogged her footsteps until a fortuitous encounter with the wealthy philanthropic couple, Lord and Lady Howard De Walden. Through them she was introduced to the glittering world of the musical soirées in wealthy, aristocratic London society. Margaret was presented as the new musical prodigy. Her beautiful appearance, lively personality, intelligence and witty repartee found favour.

She thought that her dream of becoming an opera singer would never be realised, but fate intervened in the person of the famous Irish-Italian inventor, Guglielmo Marconi. "Yours is the voice I have been waiting to hear all my life" he told her after her recital at Seaford House. Marconi brought her to Italy, the country and the people she was to love and to which she was to remain faithful when more lucrative offers were made to tempt her elsewhere.

Marconi brought her to the eminent singing maestro, Alfredo Martino, who agreed to accept her as his pupil. In 1918 she made a dramatic entrance into the world of opera when she was chosen to replace Lucrezia Bori at 4 days' notice as Mimi in Puccini's *La Bohème*. On 3 February she made her operatic début at the Costanzi Opera House in Rome. The critical Roman audience rose 'to the young artist blessed with a wonderful voice who gave an unforgettable performance'. From Rome to the Dal Verme in Milan and on to the great San Carlo in Naples her reputation grew in a country and at a time when it was extremely difficult for a foreigner to be successful in Italy. "Miss Sheridan is Irish but either by luck or by instinct she sings as an Italian and as a singer and an actress she completely conquered the audience which accorded her rapturous applause" the prestigious *Corriere Della Sera* reported. In Naples she was dubbed 'Butterfly Insuperabile' by the critics and the management of the San Carlo presented her with a bust by the famous sculptor Gemitto to commemorate her appearance there.

Drawn by the extravagant reviews, Puccini came to hear her *Butterfly* which he told her "was full of charismatic intensity and childlike appeal" and resolved to coach her personally in *Manon Lescaut*. For the night of her debut as *Manon* at the prestigious Carnival season at Rimini in 1923, he presented her with a magnificent costume in gold and blue silk to wear in Act II. He later attended her performance in Cento and drove in triumph with her in an open carriage through the streets. On the death of Puccini in 1924 when she was in great demand for the many commemorative performances of the composer's works held throughout Italy. "She was an unparalleled interpreter of the music of Puccini" the Italian conductor Vincenzo Bellezza recalled: "the humanity of his characters and the lyricism of his music found a mysterious echo in her and thereby lived".

In 1922 she was invited to sing at La Scala, but political and artistic differences of opinion with Toscanini led to her estrangement from La Scala in 1924. In 1923 she partnered the great Gigli in *Andrea Chénier* at Rimini.

In 1919 and from 1925 to 1930 she represented La Scala at the seasons of international opera at Covent Garden. In her debut in 1919 as Mimi in *Bohème* there she replaced the legendary Nellie Melba who presented her with a fan in tribute. At Covent Garden she created the title role in the difficult Mascagni opera *Iris* and sang *Bohème*, *Butterfly*, *Chénier*, *Otello*, *Manon Lescaut* there as well. She sang Liu in *Turandot* with the great dramatic soprano, Dame Eva Turner, who remembers her with affection for "her lovely voice and warm and witty personality".

Her Covent Garden appearances were eagerly awaited dates on the social as well as music calendar and her many aristocratic and political friends filled the boxes at the Royal Opera House on the occasion of her appearances there. Gigli chose her as his partner for his Covent Garden début in *Andrea Chénier* in 1930. Through her influence at Covent Garden she was instrumental in bringing many famous Italian singers, including Toti Del Monte, to the attention of the British opera public.

She never sang in opera in her native Ireland, but in 1922, in the middle of the Civil War, she gave two concerts in the Theatre Royal. Her love of Italy and the Italian people made her refuse many tempting offers to sing elsewhere, notably at the Metropolitan in New York and at the Chicago Opera. Her retirement was as dramatic as her debut. A broken romance followed by medical problems led to a sudden and unexpected exit from grand opera. Despite being bombarded with offers to sing on the concert platform, she chose to remain faithful to the medium she passionately loved.

Margaret returned to Ireland in 1939 where she became a well-known if flamboyant figure in artistic and political circles. In 1950 she was invited to New York to become a member of the Advisory Committee of the American National Arts Foundation. From then until 1957 she divided her time between America and Ireland. She was struck with a painful cancer and died on 16 April 1958. She is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery.

From *La Sheridan — Adorable Diva: Margaret Burke Sheridan, Irish Prima Donna 1889-1958*
(Published by Wolfhound Press).

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Mircea Petcu
Patrick Fitzgerald Mooney
Pamela Forde
Catherine Briscoe
Kathy Smale
Tim Kirwan

2nd Violins

Arthur McIver
Donal Roche
Fionnuala Sherry
Elizabeth McNally
Audrey McAllister
Elias Maguire
Briega McGoldrick

Violas

Padraig O'Connor
Ruth Mann
Charles Maguire
Neil Martin
Randal Devine

Cellos

David James
Christine Cooley
Catherine Behan
Rosemary Elliott
Paula O'Callaghan
Linda Kelly

Basses

Martin Walsh
Wolfgang Eulitz
Herbert Nowak
Seamus Doyle

Flutes

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Ann Macken

Oboes

Peter Healy
David Agnew
Patricia Corcoran

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Jean Lechmar
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Horns

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Brian Jack

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Eoin Daly
Davy Martin
Killyan Bannister
Vivienne Johnson

Trombones

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Tuba

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Patricia Finnegan
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Miriam Connor
Catherine Kennedy
Dorothy Allen
Collette Delahunt
Emer Forde
Una Kinirons
Sheila Moloney
Mary Troy
Veronica Whelan
Dympna Carney
Una Larkin

Altos

Maura Devine
Ursula Fowler
Fidelma Kelly
Marie Mackey
Maureen McDonnell
Pauline McHugh
Alice Moffat
Mary Moriarty
Dorothy Thomson
Jean Walsh
Carmel Jennings
Vanessa Hayes

Tenors

Paddy Brennan
Anthony Byrne
Jim Price
Alan Westby
John Murphy
William Murphy
Dermot Deegan
Tom Carney
Patrick Ring
Conor O'Reilly
David English
Tony Madden

Baritones

John Brady
Noel O'Callaghan
John Carney
John Doyle
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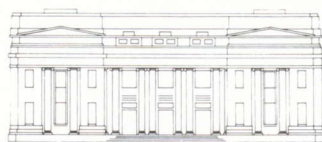
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